1/28/70

Dear Paul,

Your letter of the 20th to me, of the 24th to me and Gary, with very interesting enclosures, arrived today. So did something else which is deeply troubling, very disquieting to me. In my present state, and because it is nearing time to go get my wife, I shall with this make only breif response, if any.

First, I must burden you with something I know you will find unwelcome. Knowing your feelings and attitudes, I give you no details but, should you want them, merely ask and I'll send you copies of what is involved. If you want more than my word but also want to avoid greater contact with this nasty business, then ask Gary and Bernabei, both of whom I have kept up to date while all of this was happening, for their independent judgements. They have both disagreed with me in the past and would do so again. Dick has had similar personal experience on a smaller scale.

What I ask of you is that you give nothing of whatever description, no matter how seemingly minor, that in any way originates with me to John Nichols. He is off on what I regard as a very hazardous ego trip and in its course, aside from enormous dishonesties, is seriously jeopardizing what I (and Bud, at least) regard as the most significant thing we have to date.

To leave myself out of it as much as I can and still give you a simple, comprehensible sample that is quite minor in comparison, Dick had an idea that I had earlier held and done nothing about. It was, then, his idea, and he did most of the work on it, but we had extensive correspondence and did other things together. Dick gave this to John, to help him in his own work. John promptly copyrighted it in his own name. I cite this as an example of the kind of character we are dealing with. Here you need not depend on my estimate, for you can ask Dick. The fact is, I had forgotten it until he reminded me after seeing some of what John was up to. Gary, who spent some time with him and left uncomfortable, can add if he is so disposed.

It is unfortunate that such things come up, that there are such people and so large a percentage of so small a band is more or less this way. But it is also necessary to survive it, otherwise everything we have done is without meaning and cannot come to a meaningful end. We should have learned the hazard of trusting this kind. They have already given us a survival problem and come close to destroying our credibility. Today, the evil they have accomplished, which is separate from intent, is the greatest single barrier we have, has been the greatest single liability.

I'd best stop here. This is very upsetting.

Sincerely,